

INTRODUCTION

Washington State's Service Plan is built on a foundation of communication, cooperation, coordination and collaboration; all of which provide the framework for implementation. Collaboration, the ultimate goal of the State Service Plan, seeks to identify and develop partnerships that promote and foster volunteerism. Our State Service Plan builds on a strong history and serves as a blueprint to guide national service in building a culture of citizenship, service and responsibility.

PROGRAMMATIC AREAS OF FOCUS

The state of Washington is fortunate to have a wide variety of national service and volunteer programs working to address the critical needs of Washington State as well as needs that are unique to specific communities. National service participants and community volunteers of all ages serve in both urban and rural communities to address these unmet needs.

Due to the diverse needs throughout the state, we continue to embrace the primary focus areas established by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Those include: education, environment, human needs, public safety and emergency preparedness. In addition, to furthering the priorities and strategic focus areas established by CNCS, we complement Governor Gregoire's Priorities of Government - commonly referred to as POG. Through POG, key results are identified according to the level of importance to the citizens of Washington State and performance data is used to drive budget decisions. Examples of current priorities are to: improve student achievement in elementary, middle and high schools; improve the quality of Washington's natural resources; and improve the security of Washington's vulnerable children and adults.

COLLABORATION WITHIN THE SERVICE & VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

Many existing initiatives have proven successful in supporting and promoting volunteer service not only in Washington State but also throughout the Northwest and will continue to provide opportunities for networking and collaboration among the service and/or volunteer community. These initiatives include:

National Service Symposium: Each year, a metamorphosis takes place as members and volunteers from across Oregon and Washington transform their service experiences into writing, art and performances. The event is held in May on the campus of Portland State University and draws roughly 300 participants from the national service community. Genres include service stories (short creative nonfiction pieces inspired by service); poetry and fiction; visual arts (painting, sculpture, photography) and performing arts (dance, video, music).

Northwest Leader Corps: The Northwest Leader Corps is a training program for national service participants with leadership potential who will benefit from a multi-day, intensive personal development workshop in facilitation, planning, coaching, diversity, and teamwork. This unique program gathers approximately 30 participants from diverse national service programs across Oregon and

Washington. Training sessions take place over a seven-day span and occur in November (four days) and February (three days). Leader Corps members are expected to apply their newly learned and practiced leadership skills back at their work sites and in their communities, to share elements of the training with their teams back home, and to address unmet needs in the service community.

Northwest Network: The Northwest Network is a cross-stream event designed to meet the training and professional development needs of national service program directors and staff. The Northwest Network is held annually in August and includes intensive sessions, comprehensive workshops, and various networking opportunities.

Leadership Forum for National Service Executives: Since 2001, the Washington Commission for National and Community Service (WCNCS) has partnered with the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Affairs to offer a unique learning opportunity designed specifically for AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Learn and Serve program staff. Students complete a three-course sequence leading to a certificate in non-profit management. Participants gain specific skills in program design, budgeting, assessment, and leadership skills that are directly applicable to on-the-job challenges; and share field experiences and gain important insights from faculty and fellow students. Plans are underway to expand this valuable training to service practitioners from across the country.

New and emerging initiatives that will strengthen the service and volunteerism movement in Washington State include:

Mobilization of Volunteers Including Baby Boomers: The Washington Alliance for Volunteer Engagement (WAVE) Initiative is a three-year project designed to provide universal access to volunteer service throughout the state. Partners in the WAVE Initiative include Volunteer Centers of Washington, the Washington State Office of the CNCS, the WCNCS, the Washington Association of RSVP Directors, and the Points of Light Foundation.

Within three years, every county in the state will have a Volunteer Center, extension office or virtual center, and there will be access to volunteer service in every zip code in the state. These goals will be accomplished by:

- Connecting statewide Volunteer Center data from different vendors, including 800-Volunteer.org and Volunteer Solutions, into a single statewide database on the Volunteer Centers of Washington website www.volunteerwashington.org;
- Expanding the number of Volunteer Centers in the state;
- Increasing the capacity to connect spontaneous volunteers generated in times of disaster with the relief and recovery organization that need them;
- Extending services from existing Volunteer Centers to new hubs and extension offices in communities not fully served;

- Providing virtual services through the existing Volunteer Centers to communities without enough support for a stand-alone Volunteer Center; and
- Simplify the process for Washington residents of all ages who want to discover – and become active in – volunteering in their communities.

Engaging Students in Communities: The WCNCS is a founding partner of Service-Learning Washington, a partnership of K-20 service-learning practitioners committed to the long-term sustainability of effective high quality service-learning practices in the state of Washington. Among the convening partners are representatives of WCNCS, the Washington State Office of the CNCS, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Learn & Serve grantees (past or current), the Campus Compact, Volunteer Centers, the Senior Corps, institutions of higher education, educational service districts and school districts.

The goals of Service-Learning Washington are: 1) to connect key stakeholders in community based organizations, schools, national service, and higher education as partners to deepen service-learning practice, promote sustainability, and leverage resources to meet real community needs; and 2) to share best practices through resources, tools, education, research, and training to community based organizations, national service programs, educators, parents, students and other interested parties.

Activities of Service-Learning Washington will include training and technical assistance, hosting a statewide service-learning conference, marketing and outreach, and development of tools and resources. In addition, the partnership advocates for policy to support service-learning projects as fulfillment of the senior culminating project which is a high school graduation requirement beginning in 2008.

Increased Visibility and Public Awareness: National service organizations in Washington State will help to increase visibility and public awareness for AmeriCorps by supporting CNCS efforts to launch the first national AmeriCorps Week in March of 2007. The campaign will foster pride, strengthen esprit de corps among current members and serve as a vehicle to recruit future members.

Examples of activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Developing a media campaign to use local success stories to capture the public's attention and interest in the role, impact and potential of AmeriCorps; and
- Engaging elected officials and corporate partners in service with national service participants.

In addition to increasing visibility and public awareness through media campaigns, all streams of service will engage citizens in activities which support

national days of service including Make a Difference Day and the Martin Luther King Day of Service, etc. These efforts will enable more citizens to serve with their family and neighbors to address community issues and provide a vehicle to introduce the President's Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA) program and to encourage Washingtonians to complete 4,000 hours of service during their lifetime. WCNCS is a certifying organization for the PVSA program.

Statewide Recruitment Strategy: Recruitment has been affected in many communities because the state's economy has made steady improvement over the last two years. The state's minimum wage (\$7.63 per hour) exceeds the federal minimum wage (\$5.15) by \$2.48 per hour, causing many programs to lose viable applicants to the private sector.

To ensure that all programs successfully fill 100% of the awarded Member Service Years and to maximize limited resources, we will support programs by implementing the following recruitment strategies:

- Assemble a cross-stream workgroup to develop a statewide recruitment strategy;
- Disseminate best practices for recruitment through 4CAST, a new training and technical assistance resource;
- Develop and implement recruitment activities to increase the number of males enrolled in service (28% during the 05-06 program year); and
- Develop and implement recruitment activities to create more diverse corps through inclusion of people with disabilities.

Volunteer Recognition: In the field of service and volunteerism, we understand the importance of recognizing outstanding volunteers as well as informing the public about the many opportunities available for people who want to serve. In April 2007, Governor Gregoire will host the third annual Governor's Volunteer Service Awards in conjunction with National Volunteer Week. Organizations from across the state will nominate community volunteers who they believe represent the best qualities of the many individuals who serve their communities. We anticipate recognizing fifty volunteers each year.

In 2006, the Governor's Volunteer Service Awards event was broadcast statewide on TVW, a Washington State's Public Affairs Network. Through this public access television station, there was potential for 98% of the households in our state to become exposed to the recognition event. TVW extended an offer to discuss service and volunteerism during a one-hour news program titled "Inside Olympia." In the future, we will secure the resources of TVW as part of our efforts to increase visibility and public awareness for AmeriCorps.

Disaster Response and Preparedness: In 2003, WCNCS was designated by the Governor to serve as the Citizen Corps Council charged with increasing statewide preparedness through the Citizen Corps initiatives and encouraging

the use of service and volunteerism as a way to prepare the public to respond to all types of emergencies and disasters. This year we are using PDAT funds to offer disaster deployment training to national service programs throughout Washington and Oregon. The training will feature experts from FEMA, the Department of Homeland Security, and the state Emergency Management Division. Hands-on activities such as tabletop exercises will teach national service leadership how to involve members in responding to local disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, or the pandemic flu outbreak.

NON-MONETARY SUPPORT, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

The following are offered as suggestions for non-monetary ways that CNCS can help support and promote cross-stream collaboration leading to better use of limited resources and increased sustainability in Washington State:

- To avoid duplication of services and create opportunities for more grassroots organizations to reap the benefits of AmeriCorps national service, ensure that State Commissions and State Offices are aware of the locations of national service placements in their state including National Direct and Education Award programs;
- Engage CNCS training and technical assistance providers in establishing an annual training calendar that is in alignment with a new the grant cycle to ensure new grantees (or new staff hired by existing grantees) have the knowledge, skills and resources for successful program operation;
- Offer regional training sessions in the Northwest or Pacific Cluster on key programmatic areas of interest to all streams of service (i.e., sustainability, fiscal management, engagement of baby boomers and performance assessment) should be included on the annual training calendar (mentioned above); and
- Timely distribution of press releases and marketing materials to promote national days of service, National AmeriCorps Week and other events that will increase visibility and public awareness for AmeriCorps.

In Washington State we are fortunate to have strong relationships with the CNCS Washington State Office as well as the state's education agency. Both organizations serve as members of the State Commission and were involved in the development of the State Service Plan. It is a common practice to share resources that will enhance and expand the scope of volunteer service in Washington State.

